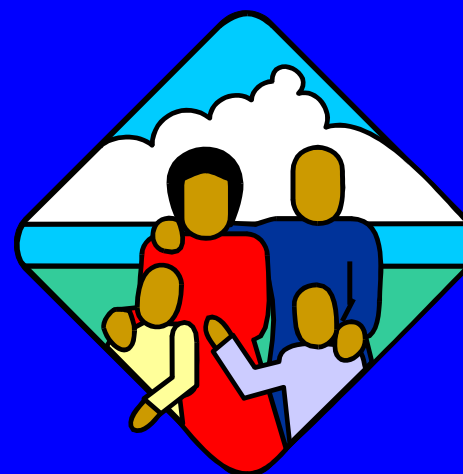




# Learning from Fit WIC



Carol Chase, MS, RD, CLE

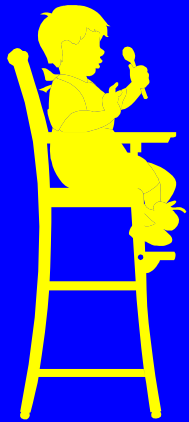


Chief, Nutrition and Breastfeeding  
Education and Training Section  
California WIC Program

# National Fit WIC Project

- 3 year USDA grant
- 5 states: CA, VA, VT, KY, ITCA
- Purposes:
  - Identify changes that state and local WIC agencies need to make to respond to childhood obesity (focusing on prevention, not treatment)
  - Share findings and recommendations with WIC Program and other programs nationwide

# Fit WIC Strategies: Participants



- Engage participants in practical, learner-centered education experiences
- Re-focus nutrition education to emphasize parent-child feeding relationship rather than specific foods

# Fit WIC Strategies: Participants

- Incorporate physical activity into all aspects of WIC services
- Help WIC families be more active at home and in their community



# Fit WIC Strategies: Staff

- Provide staff with tools and support to be nutrition and physical activity role models for participants
- Improve staff comfort in providing education to families with overweight children



# Fit WIC Strategies: Staff

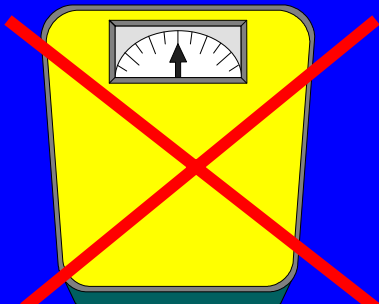
- Increase staff awareness of how WIC families perceive childhood overweight, and challenges WIC families face

# Fit WIC Strategies: Community

- Develop coalitions to support community-wide policy and organizational changes
- Use a multi-faceted community effort to ensure that WIC participants receive consistent and reinforcing messages

# What Was Successful?

- Training, specialized education materials, more time with participants
- Education focusing on healthy behaviors rather than on weight issues



# What Was Successful?

- Concrete strategies for healthy lifestyles, focusing on “how to”, involving whole family
- Physical activity promotion and support

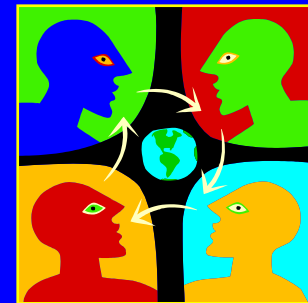


# What Was Successful?

- Workplace wellness opportunities for staff



- Working with community stakeholders



# Recommendations – What WIC Can Do *Now*

- Increase use of participant-centered assessment and education approaches
- Adopt physical activity as an essential element of nutrition assessment and education

# Recommendations – What WIC Can Do *Now*

- Change focus of participant education from weight to healthy lifestyle
- Support WIC staff in adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors, as role models for participants

# Recommendations – What WIC Can Do *Now*

- Coordinate and align with nutrition education interventions in other programs through State Nutrition Action Plans

# Recommendations – What *Else* WIC Could Do

- Expand and update staff training, especially on successful counseling strategies
- Provide workplace wellness opportunities for staff
- Increase staffing levels in WIC so more staff time can be devoted to individual and group education

# Recommendations – What *Else* WIC Could Do

- Establish partnerships with community agencies to develop community-wide interventions
- Fund additional research to evaluate the impact of obesity prevention initiatives in WIC
- Implement IOM food package recommendations

# How Can Other Programs Adapt These Recommendations?

- Use participant-centered assessment and education approaches
- Incorporate physical activity into all aspects of program services

# How Can Other Programs Adapt These Recommendations?

- Support staff in adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors, for themselves and as role models for program participants
- Focus on healthy lifestyle behaviors, rather than on weight

# How Can Other Programs Adapt These Recommendations?

- Coordinate and align with nutrition education interventions in other programs through State Nutrition Action Plans
- Establish partnerships with community agencies to develop community-wide interventions

# A Few Final Words from WIC Staff

# Personal Changes Toward a Healthier Lifestyle



“Personally, Fit WIC helped me to be more aware of the many small steps I can take each day toward a healthier lifestyle.”



“We know a lot more about what is good for us. I also walk more at work.”

# Walking the Talk

“ Although it has not been easy... little by little it has helped me change my lifestyle completely. It has motivated me to do more exercise. It is also easier for me to help my family.”

“For me personally, Fit WIC has meant losing weight and actually keeping it off for a year now!”

# More Comfortable With Weight Issues

“In the clinic, I’m more comfortable talking with participants about weight issues, and I have better materials and information to work with.”

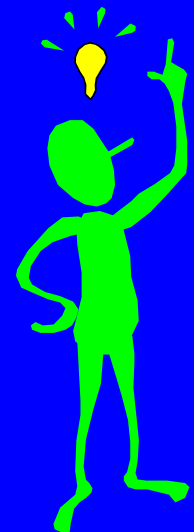


“ I feel more confident now when talking to parents about weight. I know how to word questions and have good handouts.”

“I’m more sensitive, I address the problem in a way that I don’t make them feel bad.”

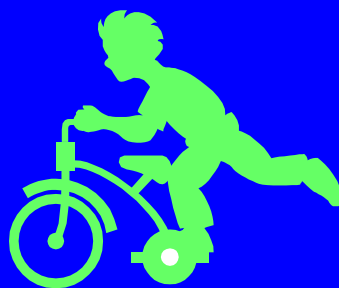
# Better Able to Help Participants

“The most awkward for me has been to speak with parents about their overweight child... I now have more magic tricks in my bag. I can individualize my approach to meet different client needs.”



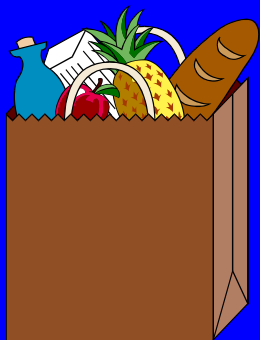
# More Emphasis on Physical Activity

“This program gave us inexpensive and practical ideas to share with parents. I realized that it doesn’t take a lot of money for families to be physically active.”



# Physical Activity

- “We talk to our clients about how much fun it is to be active and play with their kids. Clients are more into exercise.”



# Participants Are Making Changes

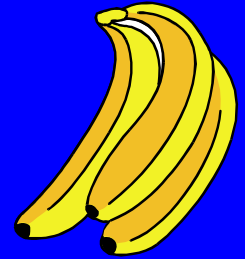


“It has really helped our clients develop a healthier lifestyle.”

“Many of our WIC parents found out how easy it is to start exercising.”



# Teaching Is Fun



“It was exciting to teach the cooking and physical activity classes because the participants responded so well to them... the participants shared equally in the teaching... by working with their children.”



“Mothers loved it, the kids were super-involved, and I was excited to teach.”

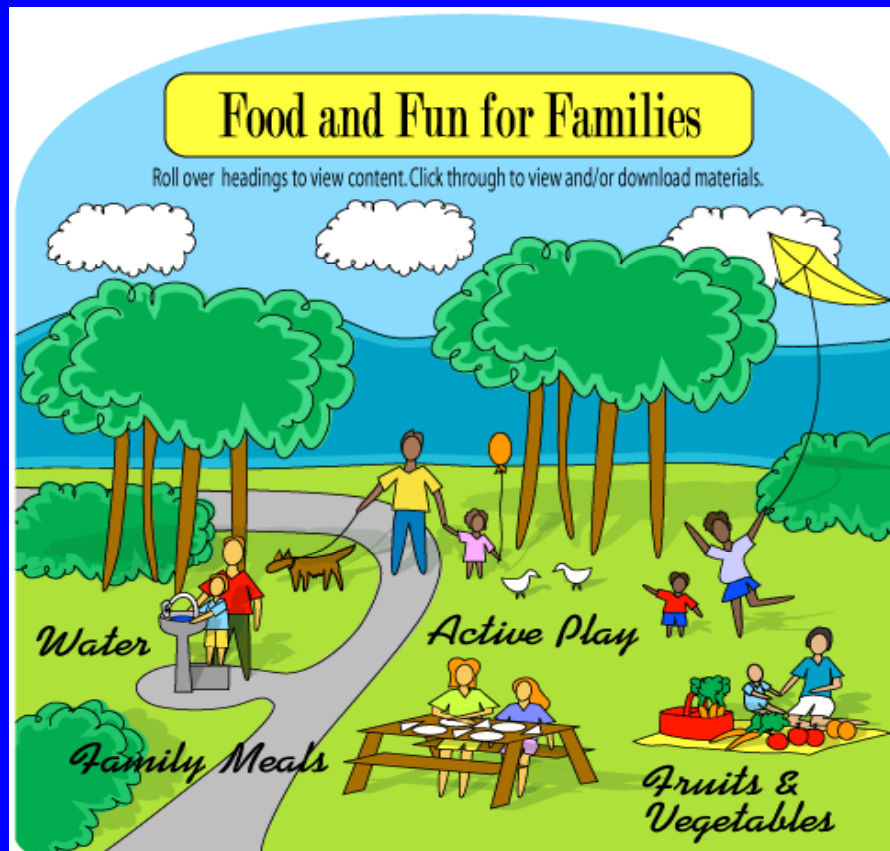
# See Fit WIC web page:

[www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Sharing\\_Center/  
statedev\\_FIT.html](http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Sharing_Center/statedev_FIT.html)



Includes Fit WIC  
Final Report

See new “Food & Fun for Families” for all the Fit WIC Nutrition & PA materials



[www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/  
Food\\_Fun/index.html](http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Food_Fun/index.html)

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